

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 5296

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BL

SUBJ: RENEWED MNR-FSB FRICTION

BEGIN SUMMARY. PROPOSAL BY FSB LEADER GUTIERREZ THAT MNR CEDE TWO OF ITS CABINET POSTS TO ARMED FORCES HAS SURFACED AGAIN UNDERLYING TENSIONS IN MNR-FSN RELATIONSHIP. SHARP RESPONSE BY PAX ESTENSSORO AND OTHER MNR LEADERS ALSO REFLECTS THAT PARTY'S INCREASING CONCERN OVER EMERGING PRE-ELECTORAL TRENDS WHICH ARE UNFAVORABLE TO ITS INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. FSB LEADER MARIO GUTIERREZ MADE PUBLIC PROPOSAL IN SANTA CRUZ AUGUST 27 THAT MNR CEDE MINISTRIES OF FINANCE AND LABOR TO ARMED FORCES, IN RETURN FOR TWO OTHER UNSPECIFIED MINISTRIES. GUTIERREZ STATED THAT THIS CHANGE WOULD ENSURE AN "EQUALITY OF CONDITIONS" BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES IN COMING ELECTIONS, WHILE AVOIDING "BASELESS SUSPICIONS" WHICH COULD ARISE DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN, SPECIFICALLY, HE CONTENDED THAT THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, DUE TO ITS KEY IMPACT ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY, AND THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, FOR ITS CONTROLLING INFLUENCE OVER AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF BOLIVIAN SOCIETY, ARE TOO VITAL TO
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BE LEFT IN THE HANDS OF EITHER OF THE TWO PARTIES.
GUTIERREZ CONCLUDED BY ASSERTING THAT THIS PROPOSAL HAD BEEN

PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT BANZER AT THE TIME OF HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE FSB, AND ALSO CALLED UPON THE MNR TO JOIN THE FALANGE IN PROCLAIMING BANZER AS ITS CANDIDATE.

2. IN RESPONSE TO GUTIERREZ STATEMENT, VARIOUS MNR LEADERS --INCLUDING MINMINES LEMA PATINO AND MINPLANNING PRADO SALMON--REJECTED OUT OF HAND NEED FOR SUCH CHANGES. IN OFFICIAL RESPONSE ON BEHALF OF PARTY, PAZ ESTENSSORO ADOPTED MORE SUBTLE APPROACH OF QUESTIONING GUTIERREZ' INTENTIONS IN MAKING SUCH A PROPOSAL. PAZ ALSO ASSERTED CATEGORICALLY THAT MNR COULD WIN 1974 ELECTIONS EVEN IN THE CASE THAT IT ABANDONED ALL OF MINISTRIES PRESENTLY OCCUPIED BY PARTY. HE QUALIFIED THIS STATEMENT, HOWEVER, BY NOTING THAT AN ELECTORAL VICTORY FOR THE MNR COULD ONLY OCCUR IN A CLIMATE OF "ELECTORAL LIBERTY AND WITHOUT THE RAISING OF A FORM OF 'BERLIN WALL' THAT WOULD ISOLATE THE CAMPESINOS." RESPONDING TO GUTIERREZ' CALL FOR AN MNR DECISION ON ITS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, PAZ ASSERTED THAT ONLY THE PARTY'S FORTHCOMING NATIONAL CONVENTION CAN DECIDE THIS ISSUE.

3. COMMENT: THIS LATEST INCIDENT IN NEVER SMOOTH COURSE OF MNR-FSB RELATIONS DERIVES, IN PART, FROM CURRENT SPECULATION ON FORTHCOMING CABINET SHUFFLE. EMBASSY SOURCES CONFIRM THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO CHANGES IN SEVERAL MINISTRIES, INCLUDING MOST OF THOSE HELD BY MNR, AND THAT PAZ ESTENSSORO HIMSELF HAS DISCUSSED NAMES OF PROPOSED NEW MINISTERS WITH HIS CLOSEST ADVISORS IN RECENT DAYS. MORE IMPORTANT ASPECT OF GUTIERREZ-PAZ INTERCHANGE, HOWEVER, IS ITS REVELATION OF GROWING MNR CONCERN OVER TRENDS IN PREELECTORAL SCENE WHICH ARE UNFAVORABLE TO PARTY'S INTERESTS. FSB CONVENTION'S ADOPTION OF POLITICAL DOCUMENT CALLING FOR AS"FUNCTIONAL CHAMBER" IN FORTHCOMING CONGRESS RANKLED MNR, WHICH DISAGREES WITH PROPOSAL BUT HAS NOT AS YET OPENLY DENOUNCED IDEA, IN INTERESTS OF FPN UNITY. LIKEWISE, FSB PROCLAMATION OF BANZER CANDIDACY HAS PUT PRESSURE ON MNR TO ALSO PROCLAIM BANZER IN ADVANCE OF PARTY CONVENTION SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER OR JANUARY; TWO
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MAJOR FACTIONS WITHIN MANR ARE DIVIDED OVER THIS ISSUE, WITH "JAIME OTERO CALDERON CELL" FAVORING IMMEDIATE CONVOCATION OF SPECIAL CONVENTION TO PROCLAIM BANZER WHILE PAZ ESTENSSORO AND BLOQUESDE TRABAJO "GUALBERTO VILLARROEL" ARE RESISTING CONSIDERATION OF MNR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AT THIS TIME. FINALLY, AS PAZ STATEMENT INDICATES, MNR IS INCREASINGLY FEARFUL THAT CONTINUING EXISTENCE OF MILITARY-CAMPESINO PACT--RECENTLY RE-AFFIRMED AT MEETING OF NATIONAL CAMPESINO WORKERS CONFEDERATION--WILL BE USED DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO DENY MNR ACCESS TO RURAL VOTERS. LATTER DEVELOPMENT,

IF IT CAME TO PASS, WOULD DEAL FATAL BLOW TO MNR PLANS TO
CAPTURE MOST OF CMPEINO VOTE AND THUS DEMONSTRATE THAT IT
REMAINS "MAJORITY" PARTY WITHIN BOLIVIA.
BREWIN

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